Clean collections : on the idea of contamination in the provenance discussion

Fayet, Roger

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/cros.12378

"CLEAN" COLLECTIONS

On the Idea of Contamination in the Provenance Discussion

Roger Fayet

Debates over provenance and how to handle museum objects are increasingly using the vocabulary of "clean" and "unclean" to characterize objects that are thought to be in some way "contaminated" by their histories.[1] This essay will first give some examples for this discussion and then examine theoretical assumption behind the notion of contamination that transfers certain problematic events linked to guilt into the essence of objects. Beyond that, I am interested in knowing whether this makes any sense and should be continued.

The terminology of "clean/unclean," "contaminated," and "toxic," as far as I can tell, first arose noticeably in the context of the Gurlitt case.[2] When Cornelius Gurlitt donated his art collection to the Bern Museum of Art, some were referred to as "clean" paintings—meaning unproblematic and admissible to the art collection of the Museum, while others were considered "contaminated" and even "toxic." When the media reported about the contract signed between the Bern Museum of Art, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Bavarian State Ministry for Justice on November 24, 2014, they emphasized that only the "clean works" of the Gurlitt collection were to be admitted into the Museum. For instance, the *Berner Zeitung* writes on June 29, 2017: "Since 2014 the complete body of work, which contains many works of classical modernism, has been carefully examined. According to the contract of the Museum of Art with the German authorities, only 'clean' paintings are to be permitted to come to Bern."[3] This means concretely that any work suspected of being looted

was not to be handed over to the Museum but was to remain in Germany in order to be returned to its rightful owners. In their statements, those responsible for the Museum used the same terminology. Marcel Brülhart, vice president of the board of trustees of the Bern Museum of Art, told the *Schweizerische Depeschenagentur* in November 2016 that the Museum would not accept works that "are not clean in their provenance."[4] A year later, the Swiss tabloid *Der Blick* quoted Museum director Nina Zimmer saying that all of the works shown in the Gurlitt exhibit are "clean," and none are under suspicion for being looted art. Asked by the *Berner Zeitung* about the state of provenance investigation in the Bern Museum of Art in general, then director Matthias Frehner replied that the Museum has "a clean inventory practice."[5]

In another vein, the notion of "clean" paintings also appears, when writers insist that cleanness can never be restored. Thus, the art critic Philipp Meier commented on the contents of the exhibit in the Bern Museum of Art for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*: "All of them are 'clean' works, and hence under no suspicion for being looted art [. . .] But has this art been, as it were, washed clean? Of course not. It remains part of their history. And this filter will always cloud the view of them."[6] As early as February 2016, Philipp Meier, together with Luzi Bernet, conducted an interview with the President of the World Jewish Congress, Ronald Lauder, who declared with references to the acquisition practice of art collector Emil Bührle: "Good faith doesn't make these paintings clean."[7] The interviewers liked this remark so much that they turned it into the title for the entire interview. About the Bern Museum's taking over the Gurlitt collection, Lauder said: "What's the good of that? The whole Gurlitt collection is contaminated."[8] The art critic Hans-Joachim Müller even suggested in *Die Welt* on this context that such "stains" adhere to the paintings: "One cannot—and that above all is the lesson from the meritorious self-examination of the Bern Museum—simply wipe away the history of these paintings with research. It will always stick to them—like stains that cannot be removed with anything."[9]

With the word "contamination" from the Latin *contaminare*, to soil or defile (German *besudeln*), yet another term from the semantic field of the pure and impure makes its appearance in the discussion of provenance. As mentioned, Lauder uses the adjective "contaminated" to characterize the Gurlitt collection. An article published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in

2017 by domestic news editor Jörg Krummenacher about paintings in the St. Gallen Museum of Art and their fate during the Nazi period bears the title "Contaminated Paintings." He criticized the lack of information about the provenance of the paintings and asked: "Are they or aren't they contaminated by their history in Nazi Germany? With one exception the Museum of Art makes no mention of this."[10]

The adjective "toxic" ratchets up the metaphor of contamination another notch, implying a threat to life. In November 2017, the *TAZ, die Tageszeitung* published a commentary by art editor Brigitte Werneburg about the various roles played by the Bern Museum of Art and the Federal Republic of Germany, which she calls, with some irony, "ingenious" as a path of least resistance. Switzerland, she says, gets to avoid "toxic paintings" while focusing on the "cheerful" side of the issue, while Germany gets to feel satisfaction for successfully coming to terms with its past. "The toxic paintings, which remain under the cloud of suspicion for having been stolen from Jewish collectors during the Nazi period are exhibited in Bonn, where Minister of Culture Monika Grütters patted herself on the back at the opening [of the critical exhibition of the Gurlitt collection in the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn]."[11] Cultural journalist Thomas E. Schmidt similarly declared in his mostly objective article titled, "Guilt and Atonement," first published in *Weltkunst* and then *Zeit Online*, that the Gurlitt collection will have to be "examined by the task force to distinguish between harmless and toxic parts, starting in February, 2014."[12]

On the meaning of objects

Where does the notion come from, that certain historical events could somehow render an object "unclean," "contaminated," "stained" or leave some mark, which renders this object dangerous? We know the phenomena from everyday experience, as well as from various cultural contexts, that particular objects, such as memorabilia, carry more and different meaning and value than their functional use, aesthetic value, or originally intended signification. The current owner derives a sense of connection, by means of the object, to another person, such as the previous owner. By association, this implies that something of the character of the previous owner (strength, wisdom, authority) carries on and is transferred to the person who owns the object now. The object is seen as representative of specific events, or particular ideas and values. What a thing means

—to those for whom it is *meaningful*— can have very little in common with what a disinterested observer sees in it.

In the loft of my parents' house, there were two trunks, one of wickerwork and the other of wood (possibly a hope chest), with imitation woodwork and the initials of the original owner inscribed on it. My father, who had inherited the trunks, had a sharply defined emotional-normative attitude toward these two objects. He dearly loved the wickerwork trunk because he received it from an aunt, who along with her husband had fought as volunteers in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side and carried their belongings back to Switzerland in it. The wooden trunk, however, he saw as a symbol of the harshness and greed of his grandmother, who owned several rental properties and demanded the surrender of objects of values from her tenants every time they could not pay their rent on time. I have maintained the semantic charge of these two trunks, following my parents, and they express similar meaning to me. However, with the passage of time, in my view they have fused together and represent different aspects of my family history; they have taken on a more narrative than normative perspective.

There are many elaborate cultural and sacral practices that charge objects with meaning, such as the construction and veneration of memorials, which are not necessarily statues and buildings created just for this purpose, but sometimes consist of ordinary objects or regular places, which have been touched by certain events (such as the death of a famous public figure). Relics are another eminent example for this type of semanticized objects, which include not only the physical remains of saints, but their garments and other objects (such as cloth that was briefly placed on their corpse). Such objects could be sold and show the pervasive assumption of "contagious" transferability of certain qualities and effects.

Museum objects are another category of things charged with meaning. In fact, being loaded with meaning constitutes the precondition for admission into a museum. Objects are collected, stored, and exhibited, because they are seen as representative signs for certain historical, social, artistic, or natural phenomena. Their signifying power and permanence comprise their peculiar strengths in the context of the transmission of knowledge, and their material participation in what they represent gives them the power to testify, at least to some extent. The ethnologist Karl-

Heinz Kohl argues that objects in museums are the modern equivalent of sacred objects, with which they share essential qualities, such as the loss of their practical functions, their symbolic nature, their separation from the everyday world, and their removal from the economic cycle[13]—even if they do not possess revelatory power and do not serve the most important function of sacred objects, namely as epiphanies. But sacral objects as well as museum objects show that it is possible to load things with certain meaning that is not intrinsic to the objects themselves. Many cultural practices build upon this feature of the object. As Kohl argues, "on the basis of their concreteness and solidity, objects lend themselves especially well to the embodiment of memories, ideas, and feelings, which can be transported across time and space and thereby assume some permanence. In this respect, they seem superior even to language, which is a much more fleeting and unstable medium."[14]

The concept of semanticization

There has been much reflection and publication on the signifying function of museum objects. Since the 1970s, semiological museum theory has examined the relationship between things and meaning built on the analogy between language and the medium of exhibitions. For instance, in an 1972 essay, American museum expert and then director of the Brooklyn Museum Duncan F. Cameron compared exhibitions to a semi-linguistic system, in which objects are arranged in such a way, complemented by textual and design elements, that statements develop that are comparable to sentence structures: "the language of the museum depends on the object as noun, the relationships between objects as verbs, the groupings or displays of objects as cohesive statements (patterns rather than sentences or paragraphs), and in all of this the supplementary media of print, graphic, photograph, film, and the line, colour and form of object environment are the adjectives and adverbs."[15] For the museum expert Ivo Maroević, the referential function of objects is the peculiar feature of museum objects. Upon entry into the museum, they are no longer merely identical to themselves but function as signs for a reality, which transcends them: "Museality is the quality of objects of the human cultural heritage by which they function in a specific reality as documents of another reality."[16] Krzysztof Pomian has coined the proficient term "semiophore" (i.e., sign-bearer) to refer to those objects that are

candidates for museification or (in the days before museums existed) were chosen for collection. The term "semiophore" implies their dual nature, its lower level or material carrier and its upper level that signifies meaning. In principle, loading matter with meaning does not depend on any particular kind of matter or specific social locality. The trunks in my parents' attic can serve as semiophores. But for objects to make their way into a museum collection, "they must turn into semiophores, whatever their original status may have been."[17] I myself have proposed to complicate this understanding of a thing as a simple or unified sign, by a theory of objects as conglomerates of several signs, that is, as plural signs.[18] This, I believe, is of considerable importance to understand the problem of the multiple meanings of objects.

The multiplicity of meaning is a feature of objects, which makes them problematic, notwithstanding Karl-Heinz Kohl's celebration of the medial use of things as superior to language because of their concreteness and permanence. In this context, Maroević even speaks about multiple identities of a museum object and concludes: "The identities of the museum object allow for a broad spectrum of possible interpretations of the object's world in the museum communication."[19] There is no medium, argues Cameron, that seems to be harder to work with than the museum exhibition.[20]

But there is a crucial difference between the notion that objects are loaded with extrinsic meanings and the idea of contamination: In the first case, the relationship between material object and meaning is somewhat arbitrary and entirely situated in the mind of viewer (another viewer can "read" the same object differently, which is permitted under this premise), while the concept of contamination presupposes a change in the material substance of the object. Of course, there are some semiotic approaches with similar tendencies to materialize meaning in the object by way of certain images and metaphors. For instance, Michael Parmentier, eminent German scholar of education who died in 2018, formulated the relationship between object and meaning suggestively as "things acquire different meanings in the course of time that—to put it somewhat roughly—remain attached to them, and cling to them in successive layers like the rings in a tree trunk, so to speak."[21] Similarly, Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy argue in their report on the restitution of cultural objects expropriated by colonialists, *Restituer le patrimoine africain*,

that the meanings ascribed to an object in different places leave a sort of physical deposit that becomes part of its essence.

> Once they have been displaced, the objects endure a variety of processes and experiences of successive re-semanticization, and have undergone an excessive imposition of several layers of signification. [...] How are we able then to restitute to these objects the sense and functions that once belonged to them, without neglecting the fact that they had been captured and then reshaped by a plurality of semantic, symbolic, and epistemological dispositives for more than a century?[22]

It is certainly correct to observe that people who view and handle certain objects perceive changes in meaning and identity. But from an epistemological perspective, we must insist on the difference between changes in the semanticization of objects and the idea of a contamination that would change their very essence. While semiotic theories of the object such as those of Pomian, Maroević, or Cameron start from the assumption of the plasticity of the construction of meaning, which includes and extends to all things, the concept of contamination asserts the possibility of irreversible pollution of things that come into contact with problematic events. Furthermore, mere contact with the source of pollution is assumed to have the power of alteration. The idea of contamination is based on notions of *spheres* of contamination in which anything that comes into contact within widening circles of polluting events, persons, or ideas risks infection and defilement by association.

It makes a big difference whether we base our reflections of museum objects that have been involved in histories of violence, injustice, and guilt on either the theory of semantic meaning or on notions of the contamination of things. If we act on the logic of contamination, objects with a history of violence must be considered substantially altered in dangerous ways that pose a threat to their present-day environment. It becomes imperative to remove such objects as quickly as possible or at least to keep them at a safe distance, in order to safeguard museums as places of purity and value. There is no alternative, since the essence of these objects has been affected by contamination. If, on the other hand, we consider objects merely charged semantically with meaning, a charge

that remains open and subject to change, then their history becomes a matter of the *interpretation* of these events, with different semantic meanings possible and to be determined in each *particular* case. Objects are not defined by a common moment of contamination, but their perception occurs within a diversified and pluralized field of interpretations, that is potentially complex, contradictory, and complementary. Interpretations are continuously modified and replaced by new meanings, as the context of perception shifts, and the function, content, or history is interpreted differently. On that view, it is not only possible to store and exhibit items with problematic provenance in museums, but museums would be ideal places to mediate such problematic histories while keeping the possibilities of new, alternative, and different interpretations open.

The Emil Bührle collection

The idea of contamination is particularly relevant in the debate over guilt-laden artworks in the collection of Emil Bührle, which will be put on display in the Zurich Museum of Art.[23] The industrialist Emil Bührle, who came from Pforzheim and lived in Zurich since 1924, amassed an important collection of art during the years from 1936 to 1956 including masterpieces of French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, which he supplemented with notable paintings by the Old Masters and medieval sculptures. After his death in 1956, one third of his collection was placed in a foundation set up by his descendants, which became accessible to the public in a private museum starting in 1960. It was located in a residential building right next to the Bührle Villa, where he had stored parts of his collection. In 2015, this museum was closed for reasons of security and the collection is scheduled to move to its permanent home in 2022, once the expanded wing of the Zurich Museum of Art is completed.

The Emil Bührle collection aroused particular attention, not just because of the quality of the works it contains—among others, Courbet, Manet, Degas, Renoir, Monet, van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, and Braque—but also because of the circumstances surrounding their acquisition. Before he was called up for military service in 1914, Bührle had studied, among other subjects, art history in Freiburg im Breisgau and Munich. He began building his art collection in 1936. First, he limited himself to the Swiss art market. In 1939, he participated in an auction of the Gallery Fischer, which sold paintings confiscated from German museums as

"degenerate art" by the Nazis. He had no success, but beginning in 1942 he succeeded in acquiring more and more works by the French Impressionists from the Gallery Fischer. He made more purchases from, among others, the art dealer Fritz Nathan, who had emigrated from Munich to St. Gallen in 1936, and helped other emigrants sell their artworks to museums and private collectors. Around 100 of the 633 works that Bührle ultimately acquired came into his possession during this time. In contrast to the collector Oskar Reinhart from Winterthur, Bührle was not particularly scrupulous about provenance.[24] By the end of the war, it turned out that thirteen art pieces had been looted in occupied France. After a trial at the Swiss Federal Court's chamber for looted art, Bührle had to return these works to their proper owners. But a few years later, he repurchased nine of the paintings for a second time. After 1948, Bührle employed a secretary and curator who was responsible, among other things, to research into the origins of the paintings. Today, the provenance of all the works has been documented and is available for viewing on the Internet, including those parts of the collection that are not owned by the foundation but by the Bührle heirs.

The troubled reputation of the Bührle collection derives not only from the uncertain circumstances of some of his acquisitions but from his professional activities, in which he showed as little scruples as in building up his collection. He began his career in 1919 in his father-in-law's tool manufacturing factory in Magdeburg. In 1923, the firm bought the Swiss Machine Tool Factory in Oerlikon, which Bührle took over as director in 1924 and which he acquired in 1937 as the sole proprietor. The manufacture of arms and war material became the main business of the Oerlikon Bührle & Co. Machine Tool Factory, which over the decades delivered its products to China, Japan, Germany, France, Great Britain, North and South America, Turkey, and the Soviet Union, among others. Until 1940, France and Great Britain were important costumers, but after the occupation of France when Switzerland was completely surrounded by Axis powers, he began to sell exclusively to the latter. Before the war was over, the firm was put on the blacklist of the Western Allies, but with the beginning of the Cold War, the Western powers started buying military weaponry, including anti-aircraft systems, from Bührle's factory again. The sale of military material by Oerlikon Bührle & Co. became the subject of a detailed investigation by the Independent Expert

Commission of Switzerland—Second World War. In 2002, the Commission concluded, among other things, that the delivery of armaments to the German Reich and Italy was carried out with the support of the Swiss government and that the weapons deliveries, which consisted mainly of anti-aircraft missiles, were not of relevant military significance.[25]

Contamination or semanticization

The Bührle collection is such an instructive example because we are not dealing here with a case that concerns restitution of certain objects in a collection, or a lack of research into provenance, or a lack of historical knowledge about the person of the collector. There are few collections for which the provenances of the works have been so thoroughly researched. Looted art was restituted, early on by order of a court. Some of these works were acquired a second time, after Bührle made restitution for their theft. His activity as a collector as well as his professional activity as director and owner of a military weapons factory that sold armaments before, during, and after the Second World War have been academically investigated, and the moral implications have been thoroughly discussed. What remains, however, is the fact that the collection contains works of art with a history of Nazi theft—and the rest of his collection is in the company of the further. Moreover, we have a situation where the collector acquired a major portion of his fortune through the production and sale of weapons. If we view the collection today under the premises of the logic of contamination, their elements are "unclean" because they were either directly implicated in actions that were unjust or at least ethically dubious, or they have been contaminated although they themselves are neither legally nor ethically problematic simply by association or contagion as part of the entire complex of the collection. On that view, the museum must distance itself unless it wants to contaminate itself by integrating the collection, thereby becoming guilty for benefitting from guilt-laden objects. By contrast, if we proceed on the semantic theory of "charged" meaning of works of art, the museum creates the public forum in which the history of Bührle's collection can be debated permanently. In that case, the ethical ambiguities of certain historical events also come to the fore, as for instance the fact that acquisitions from refugees, when paid fairly, may have contributed to help people raise funds who were in desperate need for cash.

In the discussion over the admission of the Bührle collection into the Zurich Museum of Art, the logic of contamination marks, for instance, the position of member of the Zurich City Parliament, Markus Knauss, who argued that the collection Bührle was "contaminated in many ways."[26] Similarly, historian Thomas Buomberger and art historian Guido Magnaguagno in their publication *Schwarzbuch Bührle: Raubkunst für das Kunsthaus Zurich?* (The Bührle Black Book: Looted Art for the Zurich Museum of Art?) speak explicitly of "contaminated paintings"[27] and "incriminated blood-money paintings."[28] They conclude that the integration of the collection should only be considered advantageous "if not a single work retains any shadowy traces."[29] They also consider the possibility of "a public-political initiative to completely refuse admission of the Bührle foundation's collection on permanent loan and to instead stock the new rooms with the work of the many and outstanding anti-fascist artists from Zurich."[30] These calls for outright rejection of the collection are contrasted by the initiative of the city and canton of Zurich to commission a research project to contextualize the person of Emil Bührle and his collection, submitted by the Research Center for Economic and Social History of the University of Zurich.[31] The results of this research will be used in the exhibition of the collection. This can be considered as a scholarly form of semanticization of a collection's art objects.

The concept of semanticization is far better equipped to take into account the multiplicity of meanings of objects than essentialist arguments about contamination. It highlights the reality of the variability of meaning. It is also indicative of a culturally productive interaction with guilt. Without escaping into non-committal relativism—since the variability of semanticization is not the equivalent of arbitrariness—it allows for communication about the past, while maintaining the possibility of dissent. It does not aim to conceal historical injustice and moral failure, but rather encourages its acceptance. At the same time, it does not reduce the object to a certain segment of its history, but respects the presence of older—as well as more recent—histories. The question of guilt or of the morality of agency is not defused but rather becomes the point of negotiation among participants in the debate—it materializes and becomes "thinged," as Bruno Latour once explained in a pun referring to the relationship of "thing" in the usual sense of the word to "thing" as the term for the governing assembly of early Germanic communities.[32]

Notes

1. The author thanks his colleague Peter Schneemann, University of Berne, for drawing his attention to this phenomenon.
2. This refers to the discovery and confiscation of the collection of Cornelius Gurlitt in 2012, which he had inherited from his father, the art dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt. The collection in Munich comprised about 1280 works, mostly of the classical modern period; later discoveries in a domicile in Salzburg increased the collection to over 1,500 works. About a third of the works was suspected to be Nazi-looted art. So far, however, this has only been confirmed in a few cases. After the death of Cornelius Gurlitt in 2014, it became known that he had designated the Bern Museum of Art as his sole heir. The museum has taken over those works that are under no suspicion of looted art.
3. Feller, Michael, and Florine Schönmann, "Schwierigkeiten bei der Ausfuhr der Gurlitt-Bilder," *Berner Zeitung,* June 29, 2017, https://www.bernerzeitung.ch/region/bern/schwierigkeiten-bei-der-ausfuhr-der-gurlittbilder/story/23792756, accessed on June 17, 2019.
4. sda, Schweizerische Depeschenagentur, "'Wir bereuen es nicht, das Gurlitt-Erbe angenommen zu haben,' Marcel Brülhart, Vizepräsident der Dachstiftung des Kunstmuseums Bern, äussert sich zum Rechtsstreit um das Gurlitt-Erbe," *Der Bund,* September 18, 2016, https://www.derbund.ch/bern/kanton/wir-bereuen-es-nicht-das-gurlitterbe-angenommen-zu-haben/story/20780681, accessed on June 17, 2019.
5. Cf. Maurer, Christian, "Endlich am Licht, was Gurlitt verbarg," *Der Blick,* November 2, 2017, https://www.blick.ch/life/heute-oeffnet-im-kunstmuseum-bern-die-wichtigste-ausstellung-des-jahres-endlich-am-licht-was-gurlitt-verbarg-id7543, accessed on March 10, 2019.
6. Meier, Philipp, "Gurlitt-Kunst in Bern: Die 'Kunst-Opfer' treten in den Zeugenstand," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* November 2, 2017, https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/wiedergutmachung-an-der-kunst-ld.1325655, accessed on June 17, 2019.
7. Bernet, Luzi, and Philipp Meier, "'Guter Glaube macht Bilder nicht sauber,' Interview mit Ronald S. Lauder," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* February 3, 2016, https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/guter-glaube-macht-bilder-nicht-sauber-1.18688461, accessed on June 17, 2019.
8. Ibid.
9. Müller, Hans-Joachim, "Diese Kunstbeute der Nazis gibt weiter Rätsel auf," *Die Welt,* April 26, 2016, https://www.welt.de/kultur/kunst-und-architektur/article154772103/Diese-Kunstbeute-der-Nazis-gibt-weiter-Raetsel-auf.html, accessed on June 17, 2019.
10. Krummenacher, Jörg, "Kontaminierte Bilder," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* February 16, 2017, https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/stgallens-zeigt-kunstwerke-aus-der-nazi-zeit-vergiftete-und-entgiftete-bilder-ld.145917, accessed on June 17, 2019.
11. Werneburg, Brigitte, "Kommentar Gurlitt-Ausstellung: Geniale Rollenverteilung," *TAZ, die Tageszeitung,* November 3, 2017, http://www.taz.de/!5457569/, accessed on June 17, 2019.
12. Schmidt, Thomas E., "Sammlung Gurlitt: Schuld und Sühne," *Zeit online,* September 30, 2017, https://www.zeit.de/kultur/kunst/2017-09/cornelius-gurlitt-umgang-raubkunst, accessed on June 17, 2019.
13. Cf. Kohl, Karl-Heinz, *Die Macht der Dinge: Geschichte und Theorie sakraler Objekte,* Munich: C. H. Beck, 2003, p. 154.
14. Ibid., pp. 120–21.

15. Cameron, Duncan F., "Problems in the language of museum interpretation," *The museum in the service of man: today and tomorrow. The museum's educational and cultural role. The papers from the Ninth General Conference of ICOM*, Paris: ICOM International Council of Museums, 1972, p. 91.
16. Maroević, Ivo, "Die Museumsausstellung als museologische Herausforderung," *Museum aktuell* 83, 2002, p. 3521.
17. Pomian, Krzysztof, *Des saintes reliques à l'art moderne: Venise – Chicago, XIII^e – XX^e siècle*, Paris: Gallimard, 2003, p. 157.
18. Cf. Fayet, Roger, *Die Logik des Museums: Beiträge zur Museologie*, Baden (Switzerland): Hier und Jetzt, 2015, pp. 29–48.
19. Maroević (2002), p. 3522.
20. Cf. Cameron (1972), p. 90.
21. Parmentier, Michael, "Die Dinge und ihre Zeichen: Ein etwas polemisch geratenes Plädoyer für eine strukturale Analyse musealer Gegenstände," *Mitteilungen & Materialien, Zeitschrift für Museum und Bildung* 49 (1998), p. 35.
22. Sarr, Felwine, and Bénédicte Savoy, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Heritage*, trans. Drew S. Burk, Paris: Ministère de la Culture / CNRS / ENS Paris Saclay / Université Paris Nanterre, 2018, p. 30.
23. With regard to transparency, the author points out that in his function as Associate Professor at the University of Zurich he is a member of the board of trustees of the Bührle Collection.
24. Cf. Francini, Esther Tisa, et al., *Fluchtgut – Raubgut: Der Transfer von Kulturgütern in und über die Schweiz 1933–1945 und die Frage der Restitution* (Veröffentlichungen der Unabhängigen Expertenkommission Schweiz – Zweiter Weltkrieg, 1), Zurich: Chronos, 2001, pp. 108, 414, and 454.
25. Cf. Hug, Peter, *Schweizer Rüstungsindustrie und Kriegsmaterialhandel zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus: Unternehmensstrategien – Marktentwicklung – politische Überwachung* (Veröffentlichungen der Unabhängigen Expertenkommission Schweiz – Zweiter Weltkrieg, 11), Zurich: Chronos, 2002, pp. 795, 802–5, and 809.
26. Stadt Zürich, Gemeinderat, *Auszug aus dem substanziellen Protokoll, 121. Ratssitzung vom 26. Oktober 2016*, item 2369, https://www.gemeinderat-zuerich.ch/Geschaefte/detailansicht-geschaeft/Dokument/22ca59a1-b733-411c-b477-1d8a33083028/2016_0409%20Protokollauszug%20substanziell.pdf, accessed on June 17, 2019.
27. Magnaguagno, Guido, "Die Sammlung Bührle: Raubkunst und Fluchtgut," in Thomas Buomberger, and Guido Magnaguagno, *Schwarzbuch Bührle: Raubkunst für das Kunsthaus Zürich?*, Zurich: Rotpunktverlag, 2015, p. 118.
28. Ibid., p. 127.
29. Buomberger, Thomas, and Guido Magnaguagno, *Schwarzbuch Bührle: Raubkunst für das Kunsthaus Zürich?*, Zurich: Rotpunktverlag, 2015, p. 9.
30. Ibid., "Vorbemerkung zur E-Book-Ausgabe, Dezember 2015" (preliminary remarks on the E-Book issue, December 2015).
31. Cf. https://www.fsw.uzh.ch/de/personenaz/lehrstuhlleimgruber/Forschung.html, accessed on June 17, 2019.

32. The pun originates from an unpublished lecture by Bruno Latour, held as part of the conference *Im Reich der Dinge: Das Museum als Erkenntnisinstrument,* Deutsches Hygiene-Museum in cooperation with Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte Berlin, Dresden, May 6 to 8, 2004.